

## Abstract

[0215] A method and apparatus for performing a lookup in a switching device of a packet switched network where the lookup includes a plurality of distinct operations each of which returns a result that includes a pointer to a next operation in a sequence of operations for the lookup. The method includes determining a first lookup operation to be executed, executing the first lookup operation including returning a result and determining if the result includes a pointer to another lookup operation in the sequence of operations. If the result includes a pointer to another lookup operation, the lookup operation indicated by the result is executed. Else, the lookup is terminated.